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Stripes™



A news digest from The Stars and Stripes

Friday, April 17, 1998

Eight pages

Pentagon finances in disarray, experts say

WASHINGTON (AP) — “Dogged resistance” to change has hampered efforts to modernize a Pentagon financial management system unable to account for billions of dollars in assets, government auditors say.

“The financial statement data for most Department of Defense funds remain unreliable and essentially not in condition for audit,” Pentagon Inspector General Eleanor Hill told a House hearing Thursday.

She said that as part of an overall government effort at financial management reform the Pentagon has streamlined its operations, “yet there is dogged resistance to the concept of simplifying our accounting.”

The administration last month released the first-ever detailed financial statement for the government, naming the Defense Department as one agency with unsatisfactory bookkeeping operations.

Pentagon management deficiencies, said Gene Dodaro of the General Accounting Office, the investigative and auditing branch of Congress, “represent the single largest obstacle” to getting a firm hold on federal spend-

ing practices.

Dodaro noted that 200 cruise missiles listed in one database had been destroyed years before as part of a treaty with the Soviet Union.

He also said that physical counts at 13 major Navy storage facilities came up with quantities different from recorded inventories 23 percent of the time.

Dodaro, who testified before the Government Reform and Oversight subcommittee on government management, information and technology, also said a Pentagon estimate of \$38.7 billion in environmental clean-up liabilities last year probably understated the real liability by tens of billions of dollars.

“These problems are severe and we cannot allow them to persist,” said Rep. Stephen Horn, R-Calif., the subcommittee chairman.

“It ought to be a big event in this nation that military materiel cannot be accounted for,” said Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio.

“It raises profound questions about the national defense and how safe we are.”

Southern storms kill 10 people

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tornadoes swept across parts of the South throughout Thursday, ripping off roofs in downtown Nashville and splintering mobile homes in rural areas. At least 10 people were killed in the storms.

No deaths were reported in Nashville, but heavy damages forced police to patrol downtown to prevent looting.

The Tennessee Oilers’ football stadium, which is about one-third complete, was among the structures damaged.

“Parts of the stadium were being tossed around like Popsicle sticks. I’ve never seen anything like it,” said Rodney Stanford, who was at a nearby restaurant.

Four people, including a little brother and sister, were killed before dawn by tornados in rural parts of Arkansas and Tennessee.

Three people were killed when a twister touched down in the evening in west Tennessee near the Alabama border and three people died in powerful storms in southern Kentucky.

More than 100 people have been killed by tornadoes so far this year, all but two in southern states.

Troops from Texas unit going to Bosnia

By Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Army has decided to shift responsibility for peacekeeping in Bosnia to one of its premier U.S.-based divisions, relieving European-based units that have borne the brunt of the assignment for more than two years, officials announced Thursday.

Army officials said the decision to send elements of the 1st Cavalry Division from Ft. Hood, Texas, represented an effort to spread the burden of the Bosnia

operation.

But the move to convert a sizable portion of a first-tier Army division into a peacekeeping force for a year prompted expressions of concern from some Republicans on Capitol Hill, who questioned the impact on overall U.S. military readiness.

“The Army is disassembling one of its most ready, most fearsome war-fighting divisions,” said a staff member on the House National Security Committee.

“The action shows how the requirements to do Bosnia are detracting from the military’s ability to do high-intensity conflicts.”

The announcement coincided with renewed concern, inside and outside the Pentagon, that conventional combat skills are being eroded by a combination of troop reductions, budget cuts and proliferating commitments to noncombat operations in Bosnia, the Middle East and elsewhere since the Cold War’s end.

Pentagon computers unsecured

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hiding behind anonymous keyboard clicks, a group of hackers struggled for two weeks to breach U.S. military and civilian computer networks. They succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, the Pentagon said Thursday.

The culprits: a special U.S. national security team that was secretly testing the vulnerability of the nation's computer system using software found on the Internet.

Code-named "Eligible Receiver," the cyberwar game proved what the Defense Department said it has long known — that its computers are susceptible targets, which became clear earlier this year when real hackers made a "systematic attack."

"It found that we have a lot of work to do to provide better security," Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said of the cyberwar game last June, which went after unclassified computer systems. "We're not alone in this regard."

The Pentagon plans to spend nearly \$1 billion a year for the next several years to improve its classified and unclassified computer security, Bacon said, noting the department has 2.1 million computers. Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre is shepherding a stepped-up anti-hacker program.

Jury penalizes Bradley maker

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A federal jury has levied a \$310 million judgment against FMC Corp. over its production of the troubled Bradley fighting vehicle.

A dozen years ago, engineer Henry Boisvert discovered his company's amphibious Bradley tended to leak when it crossed a river. A jury on Tuesday unanimously agreed with that and other claims filed in his lawsuit under a whistleblower law.

The decision in one of the largest verdicts ever for someone using a law designed to fight fraud against the government.

Paula Jones says she'll appeal dismissal of suit

DALLAS (AP) — Paula Jones spoke for only 20 seconds before she needed more than a minute to regain her composure.

Then starting her news conference again with her husband's reassuring arm on her shoulder, a weeping Mrs. Jones announced that she thought she has a strong enough case to appeal the dismissal of her sexual-harassment lawsuit against President Clinton.

"Despite the continuing personal strain on my family and me, in the end, I have not come this far to see the law let men who have done such things dodge their responsibility," she said Thursday while wiping the tears from her face.

Mrs. Jones said she was surprised when a federal judge on April 1 dismissed her allegations that Clinton

had violated her civil rights by exposing himself and requesting oral sex in a Little Rock, Ark., hotel in 1991.

"I was shocked because I believed what Mr. Clinton did to me was wrong and that the law protects women who are subjected to that kind of abuse of power," she said.

On a state visit in Chile, Clinton said he had felt good about the dismissal of the 4-year-old civil lawsuit and declined to comment on the latest turn. "It's a very unusual political environment, but I'm just not going to let the politics get in my way," he said. Mrs. Jones' appeal sets the stage for a legal battle that could be lengthy. She said she had to take time to weigh the question of an appeal against the continuing stress on her husband, Stephen, and two young sons.

Iraq demands end to sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Raising the threat of a new crisis over U.N. arms inspections, Iraq demanded Thursday that the Security Council lift economic sanctions when it meets this month to review the status of Baghdad's weapons program.

But United Nations officials said there was little chance the council will do so when it meets, possibly the week of April 27.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said weapons inspectors will tell the council that they cannot confirm Iraq's claims that it has destroyed all long-range missiles and mass destruction weapons.

That is the main condition for the council to lift the sanctions imposed in 1990 after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's troops invaded Kuwait, triggering the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Stripes

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Waste disposal growing problem

By Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — While the Pentagon struggles to dispose of napalm stored in Southern California, the Army is seeking to transport a toxic solution of heavy metals from a Pacific chemical weapons site through the port of Long Beach, Calif., to an incinerator near St. Louis.

The Army's plans, like the unwanted napalm train, point to a growing problem facing the military as it tries to rid itself of weapons and dangerous substances left over from the Cold War by transporting them to disposal sites throughout the United States.

For most of this century, the military has had wide latitude to dispose of arms and dangerous trash as it wished, often in the back lots of wide-open bases.

But rising environmental sensitivities, the need to dismantle the Cold War's deadly legacy, and the pressure of population centers near once-remote bases have made cleanup more urgent — and a lot harder.

From long-buried but live artillery shells near Sacramento, Calif., to nuclear waste in the Southwest and uranium shipments scheduled to pass through the San Francisco Bay area, the government's hazardous wastes are causing concern and resistance.

The most urgent issues today are the estimated \$300 billion cleanup of U.S. nuclear-weapons plants and the \$14 billion destruction of U.S. chemical weapons now scattered in depots around the country. But across the nation, dozens of military bases are wrestling with smaller-scale waste-disposal issues that often embroil their neighboring communities.

In the case of the 65,000-gallon heavy metal shipment, the Environmental Protection Agency said Thursday it was being pressured by the Army to approve the

Napalm-carrying train turns back to California

WASHINGTON (AP) — A railcar carrying 12,000 gallons of napalm headed back to California Thursday after political protests prompted an Indiana company to back out of a Navy deal to recycle the jellied gasoline.

Despite the hubbub, the military was getting calls from companies that want to take over the job of destroying 3.3 million gallons of the firebomb and flamethrower fuel stored at a naval weapons station near San Diego since its use was banned in the Vietnam War.

"Many companies around the country are willing, prepared and able to do this," Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon told reporters.

Bacon said it could take weeks, however, to approve a company for the job that was rejected Monday by Pollution Control Industries of East Chicago, Ind., which held a \$2.5 mil-

lion subcontract in the \$24 million napalm recycling program. The plan is to ship the napalm to a recycling plant batch by batch over a two-year period.

The first 12,000-gallon shipment left California Saturday, traveling the rails through parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. It was held overnight Wednesday in Kansas City, Kan.

The Navy decided Thursday to send the shipment to China Lake Naval Weapons Testing Center, about 120 miles northeast of Los Angeles, for storage until a company is found to "treat it or process it," said Navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Jon Smith.

Members of Congress from Indiana and Illinois had protested the original shipment, saying the Navy was trying to force the project on an unwilling public that associates napalm with brutal images in Vietnam.

procedure even before a period of public comment ends on June 1 because the containers holding the liquid on Johnston Atoll, 800 miles southwest of Hawaii, are deteriorating.

"They aren't in pristine condition," said Gary Hlavsa, an Army chemical weapons demilitarization expert. But he denied that the operation was urgent.

The slurry is a mix of decontamination solution used a quarter of a century ago to clean chemical weapons and nerve agents out of containers, and heavy metals,

which officials believe have leached out of the steel walls of the containers holding the solution.

While not volatile like napalm, the heavy metals — lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium and chromium, according to Hlavsa — are particularly hazardous if mishandled. Human exposure to the various metals has been linked to extensive brain, kidney and nervous-system damage, among other dangers.

The origins of the current problem date to 1971.

Study shows U.S. leads world in gun deaths

ATLANTA (AP) — The United States has by far the highest rate of gun deaths — murders, suicides and accidents — among the world's 36 richest nations, a government study found.

The U.S. rate for gun deaths in 1994 was 14.24 per 100,000 people. Japan had the lowest rate, at .05 per

100,000.

The study, done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is the first comprehensive international look at gun-related deaths. It was published Thursday in the International Journal of Epidemiology.

The CDC would not speculate why the death rates var-

ied.

But other researchers said easy access to guns and society's acceptance of violence are part of the problem in the United States.

"If you have a country saturated with guns — available to people when they are intoxicated, angry or depressed — it's not unusual guns will be

used more often," said Dr. Rebecca Peters, a Johns Hopkins University fellow specializing in gun violence.

"This has to be treated as a public health emergency."

The National Rifle Association called the study shoddy because it failed to examine all the various causes of violent deaths.

Politicians doubt public's knowledge

WASHINGTON (AP) — In answer to Americans who don't trust government insiders in Washington, a new survey found the feeling tends to be mutual.

Interviews with elected officials, political appointees and high-level bureaucrats found a majority do not think Americans know enough about issues to form wise opinions about what should be done.

"They believe that the public doesn't pay attention to

policy issues these days," said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center For the People and the Press, which conducted interviews with 81 members of Congress, 98 presidentially appointed officials and 151 top-level civil servants. The National Journal paid for the study.

"They see the complexity of the problems they deal with and wonder, if not doubt, if the public is up to making these decisions," Kohut said.

Only 13 percent of presidential appointees and 14 percent of the executive civil servants interviewed said they think Americans know enough to make wise policy decisions, while more than three quarters of the two groups answered negatively.

Most members of Congress interviewed also were not ready to trust their constituents' knowledge of issues. Thirty-one percent said they did; 47 percent said they did

not. But the elected politicians were much more likely to "trust in American people on Election Day," with 64 percent saying they trusted Americans at the ballot boxes "a great deal" and 31 percent "a fair amount." Only 34 percent of the political appointees and civil servants trusted voters "a great deal" on election day, with 51% of political appointees and 44% of civil servants trusting them "a fair amount."

KMart yanking T-shirts after obscenity complaints

By Scripps Howard

DENVER — KMart Corp. stores nationwide yanked talking Cookie Monster T-shirts from their shelves Thursday, a day after a Denver couple complained that they play an obscene recording.

"I think it's great," said Claudia Luevana of the move.

"My son loves stuff like (the T-shirt) because he likes to learn things, but I do not want to teach him this."

The discount chain had ordered 300,000 of the talking T-shirts and sold 150,000 in the past three weeks.

Luevana and William Medina bought one of the shirts last week for their 19-month-old son, Willie. The shirt depicts the *Sesame Street* character in a dump truck full of cookies.

The couple was shocked last Saturday to hear the boy saying an obscene word. They soon determined his teacher was the T-shirt, which is sup-

posed to say "Time to truck." But the message sounds like an obscenity.

A Kmart assistant manager, Kathy Stenson, agreed.

"We're pulling them off the shelves," said Michele Jasukaitis, Kmart's corporate spokeswoman.

She said Thursday that the Denver-area complaint was the first the company had heard.

"They (the T-shirts) go through a quality-assurance test before they are bought and put on the shelves," she said.

"It could be that the microchip was faulty. It's something that we would look into," she said.

Bentex, which is based in New York City, manufactures the T-shirt. Representatives could not be reached for comment Thursday.

The chain will offer a refund to anyone who bought the T-shirt, which sells for \$12.99 each.

FAA wants to rewire its popular jets

By Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators Thursday proposed overhauling the wiring of the most popular passenger jet in the world — the Boeing 737 — because information gleaned from the crash of TWA Flight 800 has raised doubts about the safety of its fuel monitoring system.

The Federal Aviation Administration order would affect all but about 100 of the nearly 3,000 Boeing 737s in operation worldwide, including 1,140 registered in the United States, Boeing officials said.

The TWA 800 crash involved a larger plane, the Boeing 747, which exploded off Long Island on July 17, 1996, killing all 230 people on board. In its investigation of that crash, the National Transportation Safety Board has focused on why the center fuel tank exploded. Investigators have stressed they still do not know what caused the deadly spark, but have examined closely the wiring in fuel monitoring systems used in both the 747 and the 737.

Investigators note an eerily similar pattern in a 1990 accident involving a Philippines Air Lines 737. The center fuel tank exploded shortly after the plane pushed back from the ramp at Manila airport, killing eight people and destroying the aircraft.

Would-be doctor's suit thrown out

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A would-be doctor who claimed that he is black and that lepers subsidized his education is suing Princeton for revealing discrepancies in his record to medical schools. He admits he lied but argues Princeton violated his privacy.

Rommel Nobay graduated from Princeton in 1989. He was accepted to Vanderbilt University's medical school in 1991, and to Georgetown, Tufts and Dartmouth in 1994.

But he claims the schools withdrew their offers or pressured Nobay to withdraw his applications

after being notified of discrepancies by his Princeton adviser, Jane Y. Sharaf.

Nobay admitted in federal court this week that he had lied about academic achievements and other elements of his life. For example, he was not a National Merit Scholar.

Anniversary of airlift in Berlin hailed

BERLIN (AP) — A yearlong celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift kicked off Thursday, commemorating the heroic effort that came after the Soviet Union blockaded western Berlin at the onset of the Cold War.

Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen laid a wreath at a plaque honoring U.S. Gen. Lucius D. Clay, the military governor of the U.S.-occupied zone in West Germany at the time. Clay, known as the "father of the Berlin Airlift," died exactly 20 years ago.

Diepgen praised Clay not only for saving West Berliners from starvation, but also for securing freedom and democracy for the city.

The capital is planning a series of exhibits, conferences, concerts and other events to commemorate the historic airlift. President Clinton is expected in Berlin on May 13-14 to join the ceremonies.

The Americans, British and French launched the airlift on June 26, 1948, two days after the Soviet Union cut off all land and water routes to the western half of the city in an attempt to force out the remaining Allies.

The blockade continued for a little under a year, but the stranglehold was finally released May 12, 1949. The airlift continued until the end of September while roads, rails and canals were inspected.

American and British planes flew about 278,000 flights, delivering 2.3 million tons of food, fuel — mostly coal — and medical supplies to some 2 million West Berliners.

Cambodian king says Pol Pot's death a relief

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — King Norodom Sihanouk, once an ally and at times a prisoner of Pol Pot, on Friday called the Khmer Rouge leader's death in the jungles of the Cambodia a "relief" for the country.

Sihanouk spoke to reporters as he briefly appeared outside his residence in Siem Reap, 225 kilometers (140 miles) northwest of Phnom Penh, near the fa-

Jordan's mom talks of parenting, family

By Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — They came because she's Michael Jordan's mom, but they stayed and listened because of what she said.

Deloris Jordan's advice on family values and parenting sounded so simple and basic it could have come from a Good Housekeeping recipe on raising happy, successful children.

Jordan's hourlong presentation to more than 100 parents, teachers and children at Naples Elementary School was peppered with common-sense advice and anecdotes about raising five children, one of whom is a basketball star.

"I know people want to hear me speak because I'm Michael's mom," admitted Jordan with a smile. "But I'm also Ronald, Larry, Roslyn and Deloris' mom. I'm just an ordinary person with five extraordinary children. There's no such thing as a perfect family."

Jordan spent little time extolling the virtues of having a famous son, fo-

cusing instead on the time and dedication it took to mold her children into a close, loving and supportive family. Her recent book, *Family First*, gives her personal views on some of the important ingredients of successful parenting.

While Jordan speaks at numerous conventions, meetings and gatherings, her visit to Naples on Tuesday and the one in Sigonella, Sicily, on Saturday are not paid engagements. The Navy did, however, cover the cost of her travel and hotels.

Despite a career in banking and five children to raise, Jordan said she and husband made "being there" for their children their top priority. Little League, basketball, scouts, cheerleading, band or any other activity the children participated in were always attended by one or both parents. Jordan said she made time for her children to take part in activities because that way she knew where they were. And she made time to be a part of their lives.

Police big issue in N. Ireland

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Prime Minister Tony Blair and Northern Ireland's police chief assured nervous Protestants on Thursday that a proposed peace pact won't lead to the abolition of the police force.

If peace takes root in Northern Ireland, howev-

er, something will have to give within the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Even its name — redolent of the British Empire and associated so intimately with the past three decades of violence — may have to go.

Policing looms as one of the most emotional issues

on both sides of the divide as voters make up their minds for the May 22 referendum on a new power-sharing government for Northern Ireland.

Protestant hard-liner Ian Paisley is making the police a key issue in his campaign to defeat the agreement.

bled 12th-century Angkor temple complex.

"Pol Pot's death is a relief to the nation," the king said.

Pol Pot, who died Wednesday night of heart failure, was the architect of the Maoist-inspired Khmer Rouge's attempt to transform backward Cambodia into an agrarian utopia.

Instead, from 1975-79 he turned the

country into a labor camp where as many as 2 million people died. He was no longer a leader, but a prisoner at the time of his death, kept under house arrest by his own men.

Sihanouk is no stranger to Pol Pot, nor to house arrest. During the Khmer Rouge rule he was their prisoner.

Fourteen members of his family perished at their hands.

Michael charged with lewd conduct in Calif.

By Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, California — Pop star George Michael, arrested last week in a restroom at a Beverly Hills park, was charged Thursday with lewd conduct.

The British-born heartthrob whose hit songs include *I Want Your Sex* and *Faith*, was charged with a single misdemeanor that carries a maximum six months in jail and \$1,000 fine upon conviction, De-puty District Attorney Ell-en Aragon said.

But the standard penalty for a first-time offender is one to two years probation, a \$250 fine or community service and an order to stay away from the park restroom, the prosecutor said. A misdemeanor indecent exposure charge was considered but rejected, she said.

Michael was ordered to appear in court May 5, but he can be represented by an attorney and isn't required to personally show up. His lawyer, Arthur Barens, didn't return telephone calls Thursday.

The 34-year-old singer was alone in a restroom in Will Rogers Park when an undercover officer saw him commit the lewd act on April 7, police Lt. Edward Kreins said. Details of the act weren't

disclosed.

Michael was booked for investigation of misdemeanor lewd conduct and released on \$500 bail.

Days later, Michael told CNN, "I won't even say it's the first time it's happened."

"I put myself in an extremely stupid and vulnerable position, especially because I'm in the privileged position that I am," he said. "I've put myself in that position before."

Michael also described his sexuality as "ambiguous."

"This is as good of a time as any," he said. "I want to say that I have no problem with people knowing that I'm in a relationship with a man right now. I have not been in a relationship with a woman for almost 10 years."

Harry hosts Spice Girls

TETBURY, England — He's met them in South Africa, and they invited him to the world premiere of their first movie. Thursday, Prince Harry returned the hospitality by inviting the Spice Girls to tea at his father's country estate.

The group dropped in by helicopter on Highgrove, Prince Charles' estate near this southwest England town, 140 miles west of London, leaving a few dozen disappointed fans waiting at the gate in cold and rain.

**Faces
'n'
places**

Oldest woman in the world is dead at 117

CORBEIL, Ontario (AP) — Marie Louise Meilleur, said to be the world's oldest person, has died at 117, her daughter said.

Meilleur celebrated her last birthday in August at a celebration attended by a host of dignitaries at the nursing home where she lived.

Meilleur died Thursday, said her daughter Olive Therrien.

"She's been very well until last week," said Therrien, 78, of Peterborough, Ontario.

"She got a blood clot in her leg and it moved from her leg into her lung."

Meilleur has three daughters and one son who are living. The oldest is 89, a daughter who lives in Barrie, Ontario.

It's not clear whether Meilleur realized she was the world's oldest person. She was almost blind and could barely hear.

She assumed the mantle after the death in August of Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment at age 122.

Born Aug. 29, 1880 in Kamouraska, Quebec, Meilleur had 10 children, 85 grandchildren, 80 great-grandchildren, 57 great-great-grandchildren and four great-great-great-grandchildren.

Meryl Streep captures award

BOSTON (AP) — Meryl Streep's latest award puts her in lofty company — she is the first-ever recipient of the Bette Davis Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I can't even begin to say how thrilled I am to even be mentioned in the same breath as Bette Davis. It's sort of a dream come true," Streep said Thursday at Boston University, where the award was presented.

"I think women are sexual, spiritual, physical, artistic, miserable, ambitious, religious, musical, hardworking, magical creatures," she told them. "But most often in the movies they are asked to be sexual and fashionable."

In The Stars and Stripes

10 YEARS AGO

April 17 1988 — Eight Israeli commandos, seven men and a woman, burst into the Tunisian home of PLO military chief Khalil al-Wazir and assassinated him in a spray of 170 bullets.

20 YEARS AGO

April 17 1978 — State environmental officials at Rutherford, N.J., began radiation tests to try to find a clue to the abnormally high cancer rate in that industrial community.

30 YEARS AGO

April 17 1968 — Novelist, playwright and Pulitzer Prize-winner Ednaz Ferber, whose bigger-than-life portrayals of America earned her international honors, died at the age of 80.

40 YEARS AGO

April 17 1958 — The 1958 World's Fair opened in Brussels and featured the 320-foot-high Atomium, built to represent the structure of an atom.

50 YEARS AGO

April 17 1948 — West Germany and 16 other nations pooled their recovery efforts in a move toward a European union.

Smoltz, Benes comebacks differ

By Associated Press

John Smoltz and Andy Benes enjoyed different kinds of comebacks.

Just four months after elbow surgery, Smoltz won in his return to the major leagues, helping the Atlanta Braves beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 3-1 Thursday.

Benes went back to St. Louis, the team he wanted to re-sign with, and led the Arizona Diamondbacks to an 8-2 victory over the Cardinals for a doubleheader split.

"Yeah, I heard the boos," said Benes, who pitched a seven-hitter for his first complete game since Aug. 1, 1996 at Philadelphia. "Four or five years ago, I probably wouldn't have been able to handle it, but it's not the first time and it's not going to be the last time."

Benes (2-1), who won 28 games with St. Louis from 1996-97, signed an \$18 million, three-year contract with Arizona after a \$30 million, five-year deal with

the Cardinals was nullified because it came after the deadline for teams to re-sign their former players who became free agents.

Arizona's losing streak had stretched to seven following the Cardinals' 5-4 win in the opener at Busch Stadium.



"A lot of people probably were looking forward to seeing him fail, and he handled it very professionally like the warrior he is," Arizona manager Buck Showalter said. "We're lucky to have him."

In Atlanta, Smoltz (1-0) allowed two hits in five shutout innings, striking out seven.

"I don't want to say it's a miracle," he said. "But when I remember where I was on Dec. 12, I certainly didn't think I would be here on April 16 winning my first game."

In other games, Milwaukee beat Montreal 5-3 in 14 innings, Los Angeles beat Colorado 4-3 in 10 innings, Florida beat Philadelphia 12-4, Chicago beat New York 4-3 and Houston beat Cincinnati 7-4.

At St. Louis, the Cardinals got all their RBIs in the opener from reserves Brian Hunter and David Howard. Todd Stottlemyre (2-1) allowed two runs and six hits in seven innings. Joel Adamson (0-2) was the loser.

Donovan Osborne (0-1), making his first start after beginning the season on the disabled list with a pulled groin, lost the second game, giving up five runs and six hits in five-plus innings.

Braves 3, Pirates 1

Pittsburgh's 25-inning scoreless streak finally ended with Kevin Young's RBI double off Dennis Martinez in the seventh. Mark Wohlers got three outs for his fourth save.

Tyson asks permission to visit Monaco

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A Marion County judge must give her permission in order for former boxer Mike Tyson to attend a royal gala ball he was invited to by the prince of Monaco.

On Tuesday, Tyson asked Judge Patricia J. Gifford for permission to travel to Monaco for the royal ball and to appear on an international music awards show the next day during a five-day trip.

As part of Tyson's probation for a 1992 rape conviction, he must get Gifford's permission before traveling out of the country.

The petition says he and his wife, Dr. Monica Turner-Tyson, have been invited by the prince of Monaco to attend the ball May 5. Tyson, 31, also has been invited to be a presenter at the World Music Awards in Monaco.

Gifford said Wednesday she had not ruled on the boxer's request. Tyson's passport has been in the possession of the court.

4 HRs carry White Sox past Mussina, Orioles

BALTIMORE (AP) — Rookie Jeff Abbott homered twice and Mike Sirotko pitched his first complete game in the majors as the Chicago White Sox won their first series of the season by beating Baltimore 8-2 Thursday.

Albert Belle and Ray Durham also homered for the White Sox, who connected three times against Mike Mussina (2-2). Abbott and Belle hit successive shots in the fifth inning to give Chicago a 5-0 lead. It was Belle's first homer in 45 at-bats this season.

Sirotko (2-1) gave up seven hits, walked one and struck out three in his 31st major-league appearance. Abbott entered with two home runs in his previous 23 games in majors.

In other action, it was Mariners 3, Twins 2; Devil Rays 6, Angels 5; and Athletics 12, Royals 7.

In Minneapolis, Alex Rodriguez led off the 10th inning with a solo homer off Rick Aguilera (0-2) as Seattle won its second straight following a seven-game losing streak.

After blowing their first four save

chances this season, Mariners relievers turned in their second straight strong performance.

Mike Timlin (1-1) pitched 2 1-3 scoreless innings in relief of starter Jamie Moyer. With runners at first and third and one out in the 10th, Bobby Ayala struck out Marty Cordova and got Ron Coomer on a grounder to third, getting his second save in as many nights.

In Anaheim, Calif., Bobby Smith snapped a tie with an RBI double in the seventh inning as Tampa Bay beat Anaheim to become the first expansion team in major league history to win eight of their first 13 games.

Smith put the Devil Rays up 5-4 with his double off reliever Mike Holtz (1-1) in the seventh. The Devil Rays' 8-5 start also is the best of any new team in the history of the NFL, NBA or NHL.

John Flaherty had a leadoff homer in the sixth for Tampa Bay. Devil Rays starter Tony Saunders (1-1) gave up four runs, three earned, on six hits in six innings. Roberto Hernandez pitched the ninth for his second save. In Oakland, California, Matt Stairs hit a grand slam and Jason Giambi homered twice.



Nets can clinch final playoff berth

By Associated Press

Fifteen down, one to go.

Only one playoff spot remained up for grabs today after the New York Knicks became the latest team to clinch a post-season spot with a 108-79 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Thursday night.

The New Jersey Nets can clinch the remaining spot by beating the Orlando Magic tonight. Otherwise, they'll need to beat the Detroit Pistons on Sunday unless Washington loses one of its remaining two games.

"We obviously don't want it to get down to Sunday," Keith Van Horn said.

Nets coach John Calipari held a team meeting with his players Thursday to remind them how close they are to fulfilling a goal almost no one expected them to reach.

"We talked about the season, about how much I appreciate what they've done for the organization," Calipari said. "We tried to talk about the big picture of what's happened for us this season, how many players have revived their careers."

The Nets not only can clinch a playoff spot, they also can move into the seventh spot by winning their final two games and hoping the Knicks lose Saturday

night against Chicago.

In other games Thursday, it was Utah 99, Sacramento 86; San Antonio 110, Vancouver 97; Portland 99, L.A. Clippers 90; and Golden State 88, Dallas 82.

As things currently stand, the Knicks hold the seventh spot and, much to their delight, are in control as far as securing the spot and the accompanying first-round matchup with the Miami Heat.

"No matter where we play in the playoffs, I'm sure we'll be a prohibitive underdog," coach Jeff Van Gundy said.

Larry Johnson scored 26 points despite playing on two sore ankles.

Big night for two big NHL names

By Associated Press

Recently back from a concussion, Eric Lindros is starting to look more like himself. Peter Forsberg has also returned from injury with a vengeance, although it took him a little longer to find his scoring touch.

Both superstars made their presences felt Thursday night as Lindros led the Philadelphia Flyers over the Florida Panthers 7-3 and Forsberg keyed Colorado's 4-1 victory over San Jose.

"It looks like Eric is getting his timing back," said Philadelphia coach Roger Neilson after Lindros scored two power-play goals in only his second game since missing 18 with a concussion. "At times, he was dominating. The power play was working tonight, and Eric had a lot to do with it."

Forsberg, meanwhile, had two goals and two assists to help the Avalanche snap a seven-game winless streak (0-6-1) and clinch their fourth straight division title. Forsberg, in his third game back since missing seven with a pulled groin, scored his first goals since March 7. Along with the seven games missed because of injury, he had gone goal-less in eight others. Elsewhere, it was Pittsburgh 4, Carolina 1; Montreal 2, Ottawa 0; Chicago 1, New Jersey 1; Phoenix 3, Dallas 2; St. Louis 7, Los Angeles 3; and New York Islanders 4, Tampa Bay 0.

As Boston's wins pile up, so does its pitch count

BOSTON (AP) — The late-inning wins are adding up for the Boston Red Sox and, to the dismay of pitching coach Joe Kerrigan, so are the number of first-inning pitches his starters are throwing.

That's a danger sign in an otherwise very satisfying stretch at Fenway Park. The Red Sox are 6-0 on the current homestand, their best home start in 20 years, and 9-5 overall.

Boston won four of its last six games on its last at-bat, and relievers have held the opponent scoreless in the ninth inning in five of those. But the close games have left the bullpen overworked.

Thursday's off day should help before the Red Sox begin a four-game home series against Cleveland. So should Friday's game when Pedro Martinez is scheduled to start. Of the four games in which a Red Sox starter lasted at least seven innings, he

pitched three of them.

But what happens when others pitch, like rookie Brian Rose, who threw 101 pitches in five innings, an average of 20.2, in Wednesday night's 4-3 win over Oakland?

"Our starting pitching has been very good, considering we've thrown too many pitches in the first inning," Kerrigan said.

"If we can cut that down, we can get our starters into the seventh inning."

"To do that, you have to average about 15 pitches an inning," he added. "Once you throw 29 or 30 pitches in the first inning, it takes you two to three (strong) innings to get that average back down to that."

Except for Martinez's 2-0 complete game victory Saturday over Seattle, Boston has used five relievers twice, three relievers twice and two relievers once on the homestand.

Packers need White's leadership

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The Green Bay Packers want Reggie White back as much for his leadership as for his sacks.

White, the NFL's career sacks leader, was limited to part-time duty last season because of a bad back, yet still managed to make

the Pro Bowl for a record 12th time.

Before the Super Bowl, he pledged to return in 1998:

"I'm not going to let an injury take me out of this game."

But after a disappointing Super Bowl, White be-

gan to have second thoughts.

White's agent, Jimmy Sexton, said his client met with coach Mike Holmgren last week to discuss the defensive end's future. He declined to say if White was leaning toward retirement.